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PROPERTIUS II,32: AN INTERPRETATION

BY



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A THESIS

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The undersigned certify that they have read, and that they recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies for acceptance, a thesis entitled

PROPERTIUS II,32: AN INTERPRETATION

submitted by Shirley Anne Brewer in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts.

ABSTRACT

The surface impression of II,32 is that Propertius is hurt and rather tearful; he seems jealous enough to scold Cynthia for her infidelity, but, in fear of her anger, speaks as inoffensively as possible.

When the poem is examined more closely, however, a different impression emerges. This thesis, in examining the poem line by line, considers Propertius' symbols, allusions, and style as contributing to the poem's deeper meaning, and concludes that the poem expresses a more bitter and divided state of mind than is immediately apparent.

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AMICAE MAGISTRAEQUE

OPTIMAE

SALLY HAAG

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

It is generally felt by Propertius' editors that II,32 shows the poet in a hurt, almost tearful mood. In his introduction to the poem, for example, Rothstein says, "Der Dichter spielt in dieser Elegie . . . die Rolle des fügsamen Liebhabers, der weiss, dass er seine Geliebte nicht allein besitzt, aber auch weiss, dass er dagegen nichts thun kann und dass ruhiges Hinnehmen des Unabänderlichen noch das Beste für ihn ist."¹ He is jealous enough to scold her for her infidelity to him, they feel; but he dare not make her angry, and thus tries to make his rebuke as inoffensive as possible. Enk's comment is a typical example: "Absterrere quidem eam ab hac mala consuetudine vult, sed ne ei stomachum moveat, Cynthiam semel iterumque peccantem, a gravioribus delictis tamen abstinenterem, non contemnit, quod faciat quae tot aliae committunt, non solum feminae mortales, sed etiam deae."² Only occasionally is there found a hint that this surface meaning is not the total value of the poem. Camps' statement is as definite as any: "The poet begins by complaining of Cynthia's absences from Rome, which he suspects are a cloak for amorous escapades; but then his mood changes, and he concedes, or pretends to concede, that such escapades are venial

¹Die Elegien des Sextus Propertius, ed. Max Rothstein (Berlin, 1898), ad loc. Italics mine.

²Sex. Propertii Elegiarum Liber Secundus, ed. P. J. Enk (Leyden, 1962), ad loc. Italics mine.

and that fidelity to a single man would be abnormal in Roman women of his time, or indeed in any women of any time since the end of the golden age."³

This view, however, does not take into consideration more subtle ways of suggesting one's meaning in poetry. If we look more closely at the poem, we find certain motifs consistently given certain values--and, in fact, becoming symbols; these symbols are then manipulated in such a way as to suggest a meaning for the poem. Similarly, allusions to the works of earlier authors and to real persons may contribute to the poem's meaning. Mythology, also, and the treatment of exempla should be considered, in conjunction with the other possible modes of expression.

The object of this thesis is to show that the symbols and allusions in II,32 do, in fact, yield a meaning for the poem that is somewhat different from the surface meaning. Propertius uses all the methods suggested above, supported by such more obvious means as diction and sentence structure, to express a deeper bitterness and a far more divided state of mind than appears on the surface of the poem.

³Propertius: Elegies, Book II, ed. W. A. Camps (Cambridge, 1967), ad loc. Italics mine.

CHAPTER II

SYMBOLISM AND ALLUSION

Qui videt, is peccat: qui te non viderit ergo
non cupiet; facti lumina crimen habent.⁴
1. 1 - 2

Propertius' opening couplet is a condemnation of eyes and seeing as the cause of infidelity. In a statement with the formal and logical nature of a syllogism, he moves from premise, "qui videt, is peccat," to deduction (marked by that logician's word, "ergo"⁵), "qui te non viderit ergo/non cupiet;" and from this specific deduction to general application: "facti lumina crimen habent."

Propertius' concern with the eyes is a prominent feature of his poetry. Cynthia's eyes are his joy and his inspiration:

seu cum poscentis somnum declinat ocellos
invenio causas mille poeta novas.
(II,1,11-12)

They capture and hold his love, a fact which is emphasized by its position at the very beginning of the poetry:

Cynthia prima suis miserum me cepit ocellis.
(I,1,1)

Similarly, he feels that anyone might love her eyes and on their account desire her:

⁴Except as noted, the text used is that of the Oxford Classical Text: Sexti Properti Carmina, ed. E. A. Barber, 2nd ed. Oxford, 1960.

⁵See the entry in C. T. Lewis & C. Short, A Latin Dictionary (Oxford, 1962): "In a logical conclusion, consequently, therefore;" and the examples quoted there.

quod si forte tuos vidisset Glaucus ocellos,
esses Ionii facta puella maris.
(II,26,13-14)

Love comes to him through the eyes:

dein qua primum oculos cepisti veste Propertii . . .
(III,10,15)⁶

as it may come to others. An example is Tarpeia, who falls in love with the visual beauty of Tatius in his Sabine armour:

et formosa oculis arma Sabina meis . . .
(IV,4,32)

Once love has entered the eyes, it enslaves them:

non adeo leviter nostris puer haesit ocellis
ut meus oblito pulvis amore vacet.
(I,19,5-6)

and if an affair is unhappy, the eyes are tortured:

at vos qui officia in multos revocatis amores
quantus sic cruciat lumina vestra dolor.
(II,25,39-40)

The verb videre is used in similar ways; for example, it expresses enslavement to the dictates of the beloved:

illius arbitrio noctem lucemque videbis:
gutta quoque ex oculis non nisi iussa cadet.
(IV,1,143-144)

Seeing brings love to Propertius and others:

vidistis pleno teneram candore puellam,
vidistis fuscam, ducit uterque color;
vidistis quandam Argiva prodire figura,
vidistis nostras, utraque forma rapit.
(II,25,41-44)

Compare II,22,7-8:

interea nostri quaerunt sibi vulnus ocelli,
candida non tecto pectore si qua sedet . . .

⁶cf. II,22,7, where his love is for other than Cynthia.

Similarly Tarpeia, about to fall in love with Tatius, "vidit harenosis Tatium proludere campis." (IV,4,19) The lover, however, must be careful to see only what will please his mistress:

si quid vidisti, semper vidisse negato!
aut si quid doluit forte, dolere nega!
(II,18A,3-4)

The motifs of eyes and seeing, then, are of importance to Propertius in the poetry of his love. An examination of the vocabulary he uses to indicate the eyes reveals three different words, each with different emotional undertones.

The first of his common words is ocelli. It is always used of his relationship with Cynthia, and has intimate, personal overtones. An example is I,1,1, quoted above. Oculi is somewhat broader in scope. It is used beyond the immediacy of his own love affair, but always in an erotic context.⁷ An example is II,15,12:

si nescis, oculi sunt in amore duces.

His ordinary word for eyes appears to be lumina. It is the word used in non-erotic contexts such as the following:

quid nostro gemitu turgentia lumina torques?
(I,21,3)

Phoenicis Charon lumina Phillyrides [curavit].
(II,1,60)

In several passages he uses lumina in order to pun on the literal and metaphorical meanings of the word. For example, he refers to "black lights:"

qui caput et digitos et lumina nigra puellae
et canat ut soleant molliter ire pedes?
(II,12,23-24)

⁷IV,9,53 is the only exception in 18 examples in the corpus.

Similarly he refers to "wet lights" (fire was the only source of light in Propertius' day--hence the oxymoron):

umidaque impressa siccabat lumina lana?
(III,6,17)

Compare:

aut ego transirem tua limina clausa maritus
respiciens udis prodita luminibus.
(II,7,9-10)

It is probably because of the possibilities for multiple meanings that Propertius chooses to use lumina in II,32,1-2; for the word recurs in the poem in l. 10 and l. 18, where the meanings vary but the contexts are related.

Propertius presents an explicit and clear-cut relationship between seeing and sinning. One inevitably leads to the other, while the absence of one precludes any possibility of the other. It is natural, then, that for him the eyes should come to symbolize the only significant form of wrongdoing--Cynthia's infidelity to him.

nam quid Praenesti dubias, o Cynthia, sortis
quid petis Aeaei moenia Telegoni?
1. 3 - 4

With lines 3-6, Propertius moves into the body of his poem. Cynthia is seen travelling to various cities in Latium, and Propertius is displeased with this.

The mention of the "dubias sortis" of the oracle at Praeneste introduces a supernatural and religious element into the poem. This element is immediately associated with that context of Cynthia's infidelity in which it will recur throughout the poem.

Cynthia also visits Tusculum, the city of "Aeaei Telegoni."

The periphrasis in this line is not due to any perverse love of recondite mythology on Propertius' part; rather, we are meant to read the full implications of his allusion. We are to remember that Telegonus was the son of Odysseus and Circe.⁸ Odysseus was a wanderer; and since Cynthia too is viewed in this poem as a wanderer, she can be identified with him.

Cynthia's relationship with Circe is not so immediately clear; yet the adjective "Aeaei" seems intended not only to enhance the aural beauty of the line,⁹ but particularly to emphasize the reference to Circe by means of Telegonus. The point of identification is that both Circe and Cynthia are witches.

"Cynthia" is a name chosen with care; Propertius surely meant the implications of the name to be applied to the woman about whom he wrote. E. N. O'Neil¹⁰ points out that Propertius thought of her as Cynthia--that it was possible for him to use no other name in his poetry.

The name "Cynthia" is properly an epithet of Artemis (and hence, of the Roman Diana), derived from the sacred Mt. Cynthos in Delos. By the time of Propertius' writing, Diana had long been identified with Luna and Hekate, in a triformis dea--a single goddess of three aspects. This identification is clearly shown in Horace, Ep. V, 49-51, where the witch Canidia invokes the help of "Nox et Diana" in a magic rite; since magic

⁸H. J. Rose, A Handbook of Greek Mythology Including its Extension to Rome (New York, 1959), 247.

⁹For euphony in the concurrence of vowels, see L. P. Wilkinson, Golden Latin Artistry (Cambridge, 1963), 11.

¹⁰"Cynthia and the Moon," CPh LIII (1958), 1-8.

is the province of Hekate, it is clear that Horace must identify Hekate with Nox (i. e. Luna) and Diana.¹¹

The point of O'Neil's article is that Propertius identified Cynthia with one aspect of the triformis dea--namely the moon. But he also identified her with the other aspects, and notably with Hekate.¹²

Hekate, as a goddess of the underworld, governed magic and witches, and was regularly thought of as being accompanied by Cerberus or by a pack of hell-hounds.¹³ The importance of the dog in connection with Hekate is emphasized by the identification of an archaic Greek seal showing a bitch in the act of whelping as a representation of Hekate.¹⁴ The name "Cynthia" is significant in this connection, also; for the first syllable, ΚΥΝ-, is reminiscent of ΚΥΝ-ΟΟ, meaning "dog."¹⁵ Indeed, the moon and the dog may represent the opposite sides of Cynthia's character. This idea is supported by a passage in II,16:

luna ministrat iter, demonstrant astra salebras,
ipse Amor accensas percutit ante faces,
saeva canum rabies morsus avertit hiantis . . .
(15-17)

¹¹For other references, see O'Neil, op. cit., (n.10, above).

¹²For the connection of Cynthia with Diana there is, besides the name, the following evidence:

1. In II,28,60 sacrifice is made to Diana in thanks for Cynthia's recovery from a serious illness. Since no prayer has been made to her in the poem, she must be Cynthia's patron.

2. A relationship is implied in such passages as I,1,9-16. Propertius is compared to Milanion; by implication, then, Cynthia is comparable to Atalanta, Artemis' votary.

¹³Rose, op. cit. (n.8, above), 121-122.

¹⁴R. Reiter, "A Theriomorphic Representation of Hekate-Artemis," AJA LIII (1949), 29-31.

¹⁵R. E. Braun, Docta Puella Fuit, Dissertation (University of Texas, Austin, 1968), 28-38, for Cynthia and dogs.

Propertius represents himself in this poem as attracted by Cynthia's charms ("luna") and in fear of her anger ("canum rabies") if he does not overcome his fear of robbers to go to her at Tibur. The tone is similar to that of I,3, where, finding Cynthia asleep and admiring her beauty, he longs to wake her but does not dare to do so for fear of her anger.

Another indication of Cynthia's connection with dogs is to be found in II,13A:

sed magis [cano] ut nostro stupefiat Cynthia versu:
tunc ego sim Inachio notior arte Lino.
(7-8)

We recall that there was more than one figure called "Linus" in mythology. One was the greatest of all musicians and the teacher of Hercules; but Argive Linus, the son of Apollo and of the daughter of the king of Argos, was torn to pieces by dogs.¹⁶ Both figures are implied here: Propertius would be greater in song than Linus the musician, but, like Argive Linus, he will be torn to pieces by dogs, i.e. by Cynthia in her more terrible aspect. This interpretation is supported by the very similar myth of Actaeon. He was torn to pieces by his hunting dogs, in punishment for seeing Artemis naked in her bath; and Artemis/Diana, as we have seen, is closely connected with Cynthia.

Cynthia is connected with Hekate in the sphere of magic also.

In II,20, Propertius says:

quod si nec nomen nec me tua forma teneret,
posset servitium mite tenere tuum.
septima iam plenae deducitur orbita lunae,
cum de me et de te compita nulla tacent.
(19-22)

¹⁶Rose, op. cit. (n. 8, above), 200.

The mention of the moon and street corners brings Hekate to the reader's mind;¹⁷ and on reflection, the "mite servitium" of l. 20 is reminiscent of Hekate, with her whip and hell-hounds, driving the ghosts.

If Cynthia is so closely associated with the witch goddess, her hold over Propertius must be a magical spell. Evidence that he himself cannot explain it in any other way is to be found in II,4. In a poem so bitter that he remarks (l. 17), "hostis si quis erit nobis, amet ille puellas," he discusses the failure of magic to free him of love, and continues:

quippe ubi nec causas nec apertos cernimus ictus
unde tamen veniant tot mala caeca via est;
non eget hic medicis, non lectis mollibus aeger,
huic nullum caeli tempus et aura nocet;
ambulat--et subito mirantur funus amici!
(9-14)

The clear implication is that the unfortunate lover is the victim of a hex. The very failure of magic to free him of love¹⁸ may be taken as

¹⁷For Hekate and street corners (*trivia*), see Publi Vergili Maronis Aeneidos Liber Quartus, ed. A. S. Pease, (Cambridge, Mass., 1935), on l. 609.

Propertius made use of this association and applied it to Cynthia; *trivia* are the natural meeting places for a woman connected with Hekate and her lover. O'Neil (*op. cit.*, n.10, above, p. 3-4) discusses the problem, citing the following passages:

nunc decimo admittor vix ego quoque die	12
nec licet in triviis sicca requiescere luna	15
aut per rimosas mittere verba fores	16
(II,17)	

saepe Venus trivio commissa est, pectore mixto
fecerunt tepidas pallia nostra vias
(IV,7,19-20)

lex igitur Spartana vetat secedere amantis
et licet in triviis ad latus esse suae.
(III,14,21-22)

¹⁸This is indicated in such passages as the following:

evidence that Cynthia's magic is more powerful.

Finally, Propertius frequently compares or identifies Cynthia with famous witches of mythology. In II,21, for example, he compares her with Medea and Calypso:

Colchida sic hospes quondam decepit Iason:
 evecta est (tenuit namque Creusa) domo.
 sic a Dulichio iuvene est elusa Calypso:
 vidit amatorem pandere vela suum.
 (11-14)

In I,15, Calypso is held up as a model for Cynthia:

at non sic Ithaci digressu mota Calypso
desertis olim fleverat aequoribus:
(9-10)

In II,1 he represents himself as about to die at the hands of a witch:

seu mihi sunt tangenda novercae pocula Phaedrae,
 pocula privigno non nocitura suo,
 seu mihi Circaeο pereundum est gramine, sive
 Colchis Iolciacis urat aena focis,
 una meos quoniam praedata est femina sensus
 ex hac ducentur funera nostra domo.
 (51-56)

But in the same poem he makes it clear that the real cause of his death is the spell of love cast upon him by Cynthia:

taliaque illacrimans mutae iace verba favillae:
 'Huic misero fatum dura puella fuit.'
 (77-78)

Cynthia, then is a witch and may be identified with Circe.

quod mihi non patrii poterant avertere amici,
 eluere aut vasto Thessala saga mari,
 hoc ego [sc. aversit].
 (III, 24, 9-11)

at vos, deductae quibus est fallacia lunae,
et labor in magicis sacra piare focis,
en agedum dominae mentem convertite nostrae,
et facite illa meo palleat ore magis!
tunc ego crediderim . . .
(I,1,19-23)

Through Circe's magic and Odysseus' wanderings, she is connected with Telegonus and with his city, Tusculum, one of the scenes of her infidelities.

cur ita te Herculeum deportant esseda Tibur?
1. 5

In this line, we must again read the full implications of Propertius' mythological allusion. In so complex an author as Propertius, we must not assume that an epithet or allusion is used merely for adornment until all possibilities for a meaning have been exhausted. In this case it is the adjective Herculeum for which we must seek a special significance.

Hercules bears a special significance in many passages in Propertius. He is, for example, connected with Baiae, another of the scenes of Cynthia's infidelities:

Ecquid te mediis cessantem, Cynthia Bais,
qua iacet Herculeis semita litoribus
. . . .
nostri cura subit memores a! ducere noctes?
ecquis in extremo restat amore locus?
(I,11,1-6)¹⁹

¹⁹Compare III,18,1-8:

Clausus ab umbroso qua ludit pontus Averno,
fumida Baiarum stagna tepentis aquae,
qua iacet et Troiae tubicen Misenus harena,
et sonat Herculeo structa labore via,
hic ubi, mortalis dexter cum quaereret urbes,
cymbala Thebano concrepuere deo--
at nunc invisae magno cum crimine Baiae,
quis deus in vestra constitit hostis aqua?

The context here is not erotic, but the language is surely that of betrayal. The poem, nominally a consolatio, is unpleasant and becomes grotesque; Propertius may, tongue-in-cheek, be applying the language of love

Baiae was a place notorious for luxurious living and casual love affairs. Cynthia's very presence there is strong evidence of infidelity, just as to Cicero, Clodia's presence there indicates her loose living and low moral standards. In Pro Caelio Oratio,²⁰ he makes reference four times to Clodia's life in Baiae; for example, chapter 35:

Accusatores quidem libidines, amores, adulteria, Baias, actas, convivias, comissationes, cantus, symphonias, navigia iactant.

Compare c.49:

Si quae non nupta mulier domum suam patefecerit omnium cupiditati palamque sese in meretricia vita conlocarit . . . si hoc in urbe, si in hortis, si in Baiarum illa celebritate faciat, si denique ita sese gerat . . . ut non solum meretrix sed etiam proterva meretrix procaxque videatur: cum hac si qui adulescens forte fuerit, utrum hic . . . adulter an amator . . . videatur?²¹

As if by contagion, then "Herculeum Tibur" becomes associated with infidelity of a most flagrant kind.

The major significance of Hercules in Propertius' poetry, however, is as an expression of an inversion in the roles of the sexes. F. O. Copley's article, "Servitium Amoris in the Roman Elegists,"²² examines the substance and sources of the figure which represents the lover as the slave of his beloved. In Propertius, this figure is very common; he refers to the "dulcia vincla" of love (III,15,10), to his "assuetum servitium" (I,5,5) and "grave servitium" (I,5,19); Cynthia

poetry to a topic less important in his own eyes, in order that the consequent exaggeration of the consolatio's importance may have a ludicrous effect.

²⁰ed. R. G. Austin, 3rd ed. Oxford, 1964.

²¹See also c.38 and c.47

²²TAPhA LXXVIII (1947), 285-300.

is his "domina." He says that the lover, though technically he may be free, is in actual fact a slave:

libertas quoniam nulli iam restat amanti:
 nullus liber erit, si quis amare volet.
 (II,23,23-24)²³

In several places, as Copley points out, he uses servitium without qualification or illustrative context as a synonym for amor:

sunt quoque translato gaudia servitio.
 (I,12,18)

Compare:

tu [Bacche] modo servitio vacuum me siste superbo.
 (III,17,41)

The metaphor is intended to express the lover's willingness to undergo humiliation and self-abasement in order to please his beloved.

The metaphor and the feeling it expresses may, however, be seen in a larger context. In the late republic and early principate, women were becoming more and more independent and influential, while men were assuming a more passive role in relation to them. Historians of the period consistently comment on the phenomenon; Theodor Mommsen's remarks are representative:

An equally characteristic feature in the brilliant decay of this period was the emancipation of women. In an economic point of view the women had long since made themselves independent . . . ; in the present epoch we even meet with solicitors acting specially for women . . . But it was not merely from the economic guardianship of father or husband that women felt themselves emancipated. Love-intrigues of all sorts were constantly in progress. The ballet-dancers (mimae) were quite a match for those of the present day in the variety of their pursuits and the skill with which they followed them out; their primadonnas, Cytheris and the like, pollute even the pages of history. But their, as it were, licensed

²³For the difference between in libertate esse ("to be free-born") and liber esse ("to be actually free") see Enk, Liber Secundus, ad loc.

trade was very materially injured by the free art of the ladies of aristocratic circles. Liaisons in the first houses had become so frequent, that only a scandal altogether exceptional could make them the subject of special talk; a judicial interference seemed now almost ridiculous . . . The watering-place season--in April, when political business was suspended and the world of quality congregated in Baiae and Puteoli--derived its chief charm from the relations licit and illicit which, along with music and song and elegant breakfasts on board or on shore, enlivened the gondola voyages. There the ladies held absolute sway; but they were by no means content with this domain which rightfully belonged to them; they also acted as politicians, appeared in party conferences, and took part with their money and their intrigues in the wild coterie-doings of the time. Any one who beheld these female statesmen performing on the stage of Scipio and Cato and saw at their side the young fop--as with smooth chin, delicate voice, and mincing gait, with headdress and neckerchiefs, frilled robe and women's sandals he copied the loose courtesan--might well have a horror of the unnatural world, in which the sexes seemed as though they wished to change parts.²⁴

In a social background of this kind we find Catullus' poetry.

Robert Bagg, in his article, "Some Versions of Lyric Impasse in Shakespeare and Catullus,"²⁵ discusses the subject of sex inversion in Catullus. The poet feels himself dominated by Lesbia's lust, and this feeling is revealed in his poetry. An example is #11:

Cum suis vivat valeatque moechis,
 quis simul complexa tenet trecentos,
 nullum amans vere, sed identidem omnium
 ilia rumpens;
 nec meum respected, ut ante, amorem,
 qui illius culpa cecidit velut prati
 ultimi flos, praetereunte postquam
 tactus aratro est.

(18-24)²⁶

²⁴The History of Rome, tr. W. P. Dickson (New York, 1908) V, 391-393.

²⁵Arion IV (1965), 64-95.

²⁶Quotations from Catullus are from the following edition: Catull, ed. Viktor Poschl. Heidelberg, 1960.

In the first stanza, he portrays copulation from Lesbia's point of view and from that of her lovers simultaneously; in the second, his love, in the image of a flower, is destroyed by Lesbia's lust, pictured as the cutting edge of a plough. "In the images of Lesbia first, literally, rupturing her lovers and then slicing through Catullus, we find the clear implication that her profligacy has castrated him . . . This lust of hers is ultimately so powerful that it insists Catullus react to it by either seeking to experience it from inside Lesbia's mind or letting himself turn into a female in her honour."²⁷

The idea of becoming a woman by means of castration is explored further in the figure of Attis in #63. "The Attis story allows Catullus to dwell richly on the uncomprehending madness Attis in ecstasy exhibits, a heightened reflection and embodiment of his own excruciated lust for Lesbia even when he knew it was morally insane to pursue her. The myth allows Catullus to confirm the irrevocable finality of his liaison's outcome, and confirm that violence has been done to him by his own insistence on having Lesbia. Lesbia had ripped away an idealism profoundly intertwined with his masculinity . . ."²⁸

The key to Propertius' use of Hercules in this context of sex-role inversion is the myth of his enslavement to Omphale, which Propertius treats in IV,9,45-50. Hercules was sold into slavery to expiate a homicide, and was bought by Omphale. They became lovers and he became completely subservient to her will; he exchanged clothes with her, car-

²⁷Bagg, op. cit. (n.25,above), 83.

²⁸Bagg, op. cit. (n.25, above), 84.

ried her sunshade, and did the woman's job of spinning.²⁹ This is the background of Propertius' passage:

sin aliquem vultusque meus saetaeque leonis
 terrent et Libyco sole perusta coma,
 idem ego Sidonia feci servilia palla
 officia et Lydo pensa diurna colo,
 mollis et hirsutum cepit mihi fascia pectus,
 et manibus duris apta puella fui.
 (IV,9,45-50)

The reversal of sex roles is clear here. The woman, Omphale, is dominant; Hercules, the hero, is not only a slave but a woman slave, wearing woman's clothes and doing woman's work.

This reversal of sex roles can be seen elsewhere in the poetry of Propertius in connection with Hercules. In II,23, for example, he says that labours like those of Hercules bring only humiliation--subjection to one's mistress and the loss of one's masculine role as the dominant personality in the love affair:

deinde, ubi pertuleris, quos dicit fama labores
 Herculis, ut scribat 'Muneris ecquid habes?'
 cernere uti possis vultum custodis amari,
 captus et immunda saepe latere casa.
 (7-10)

This, it must be remembered, is the poem that ends:

libertas quoniam nulli iam restat amanti,
 nullus liber erit, si quis amare volet.
 (23-24)

Similarly, in II,24B the labours of Hercules and the ideas associated with them play an important role in expressing the poem's meaning. Cynthia's new lover should be willing to undertake Hercules' labours and more, to prove his submissiveness to her:

²⁹Karl Kerényi, Die Heroen der Griechen (Zurich, 1958), 209-210.

si libitum tibi erit, Lernaeas pugnet ad hydras,
 et tibi ab Hesperio mala dracone ferat,
 taetra venena libens et naufragus ebibat undas,
 et numquam pro te deneget esse miser.
 (25-28)

So strong is her hold on Propertius that he can say:

at me non aetas mutabit tota Sibyllae,
 non labor Alcidae, non niger ille dies.
 (33-34)

He is completely in her power, and unable to free himself of her:

nil ego non patiar, numquam me iniuria mutat:
 ferre ego formosam nullum onus esse puto.
 (39-40)

Each of these passages, taken individually, is slight evidence. When they are taken together, however, and each is viewed in the light of the others, a pattern is formed in which Hercules is intimately associated with sex-role inversion.

The same reversal of sex roles can be seen in other contexts. In II,16, for example, the "praetor ab Illyricis" who is Cynthia's new love is described as "maxima praeda tibi, maxima cura mihi" (1.2). The metaphor is from warfare ("praeda"), but the roles of the sexes are reversed; for in real war, "praeda" belongs to the men, and "cura" to the women; moreover the "praeda" often are women.

So important, in Propertius' mind, was the problem of this inversion of the sex-roles that he devotes a whole poem to the subject; for III,11 is a poem, not of the power of love,³⁰ but rather of the power of

³⁰For this view, see, for example, Copley, *op. cit.* (n.22, above), 292: "Here the exemplum [i.e. of Omphale, l. 17-20] expresses the thought, 'If love was strong enough to set Hercules' hard hand to the performance of women's tasks, why should anyone be surprised that I am subject to its sway?' "

women.

Propertius makes this clear in the opening lines: "Quid mirare, meam si versat femina vitam . . .?" He makes no mention of love throughout the seventy-two lines of the poem--only of the power and dominance of women.

The first four lines treat the problem on a personal level; Propertius himself is dominated by a woman. This domination finds expression in the language of the lines. Cynthia "versat vitam;" though he is a man, she "trahit." He is "addictum sub . . . iura;" this is a legalistic phrase, applied to debtors legally awarded as virtual slaves to their creditors. He refers to his "ignavum caput;" ignavus is a word that may be, and frequently is, applied to slaves--men with no will of their own. He cannot break his "vincla," or rid himself of Cynthia's "iugum." These four lines, with their exposition of Propertius' personal subjection, establish a pattern for the rest of the elegy. Each of the exempla that follow is connected with these lines; and both his subjection to Cynthia and the exempla are connected closely with the rest of the elegy.

Because they are both witches, Medea and Cynthia are often connected in Propertius' poetry. Medea is represented here as herself ploughing Aietes' field and sowing the dragon's teeth. This variation from the common story³¹ may be explained if we identify Jason with Propertius--a clear implication of the identification of Medea and Cynthia; for in II,7,14, Propertius declares that he does not want to produce soldiers. Medea, then, is represented as taking over a man's function

³¹Rose, op. cit. (n.8, above), 202.

of ploughing and raising soldiers. The sex reversal is implicit in this description, for sexually it is the man who sows. The mention of Aeson, by recalling his rejuvenation, underlines Medea's strength and power. The exemplum is connected to the four-line proem by the prominence given to the word "iugum" in l. 9 and l. 4; Cynthia yokes Propertius just as Medea yokes the "flagrantes tauri."

Penthesilea also is connected with Cynthia; for the description of her attack reminds the reader of Cynthia's angry attacks on Propertius in such poems as III,8 and IV,8. A connection is provided with the proem by the emphasis given the word "virum" in l. 16 and l. 2; both Cynthia and Penthesilea, though women, have overcome men. The suggestion of Achilles' necrophilia recalls Propertius' theme of love in death, seen in such poems as I,17 and II,13.

With Omphale, Propertius returns to the theme of sex inversion and the lover as slave. The idea of slavery recalls the "ignavum caput" of l. 3; and the use of "trahere" in l. 20 recalls that of l. 2. This verb occurs four times³² in the poem, and each time it implies subjection and humiliation. In describing Hercules as "qui pacato statuisset in orbe columnas," Propertius is Romanizing him; for the boast of orbis pacatus and the establishment of triumphal columns are peculiarly Roman.

Semiramis is also connected with Rome of the day; for as founder of her city she may be compared with Romulus, the founder of Rome, and through him with Augustus, its second founder. The use of a plough to mark the boundaries of a new city connects her with Medea, and through

³²l. 2, 20, 35, 54.

Medea with Cynthia. Her position as ruler recalls line 1, and mention of Bactria's "caput" recalls Propertius' "ignavum caput" of l. 3.

All four exempla are of women with no men; Medea and Omphale are deserted, Semiramis is widowed, and Penthesilea is an Amazon. Each takes over a man's function--Medea, that of ploughing, Penthesilea, that of fighting, and Omphale and Semiramis the function of ruling.

The praeteritio of l. 27-28 serves to bring Jupiter into the company of the dominated men who appear in the poem to this point. Then Propertius turns to the present day, and to Cleopatra. References to the earlier part of the poem make it clear that he identifies Cleopatra with the women of the exempla and with Cynthia; opposed to them are the Romans, Augustus, Jupiter, and Propertius.

The four exempla are recalled early in the new section. The mention of war (l. 29) suggests Penthesilea; the "famuli" of l. 30 recall Omphale and her famous slave; the "regna" of l. 32 suggests the monarch Semiramis; and the "dola" of l. 33 recalls the magical arts of Medea, while the barbarian background of Medea and Cleopatra underlines the allusion. In l. 32, moreover, the verbal reminiscence of l. 2 ("addictus in sua regna Patres;" cf. "addictum sub sua iura virum") serves to connect Propertius with the senators and thus with Rome.

The lines that follow (33-38) describe the downfall and death of the Roman Pompey in Cleopatra's Egypt. The use of "detrahare" suggests humiliation and subjection;³³ the word "nota" (l. 36) serves the same purpose, since it is the word used of branding an animal.

Lines 39-50 consider Cleopatra and her ambitions. The occur-

³³Cf. above, on III,11,20.

rence of "meretrix" (l. 39) is unique in the body of Propertius' poetry; but he occasionally suggests that the word could be applied to Cynthia,³⁴ and if the reader recalls this, a connection is established. This connection is strengthened in the lines that follow.

In l. 43, the Egyptian "sistrum" is placed in opposition to the Roman "tuba." The sistrum was a kind of rattle used in the rites of Isis; and Isis was a goddess closely connected with Cynthia. In II,28, she appears as a patron goddess of Cynthia; in II,33A, Cynthia forsakes Propertius in order to observe Isis' festival. In l. 41, moreover, Egyptian Anubis is opposed to Roman Jupiter. Anubis is a dog-god, as Propertius emphasizes with the adjective "latrantem," and is associated with Isis. The relationship, in fact, is a parallel to that of Hekate and Cerberus; and Cynthia, as we know, is identified with Hekate. Moreover, Cleopatra, as an Egyptian empress-goddess, may be identified with Isis, an Egyptian goddess. Through Isis, then, Cynthia and Cleopatra are identified.

In l. 46, allusions to the exempla are found again. The phrase "iura dare" recalls the queens, Omphale and Semiramis, while the "arma Mari" recall Penthesilea.

Lines 47-48 imply that a female despot ("mulier," l. 49) is more disgraceful than a male. Tarquin was a king, and was hated for it, but the "securis," a distinctly Roman symbol of office, imply that he was at least a Roman.

In l. 50 we find Augustus, set in opposition to the "mulier" of l. 49. Augustus represents the masculine principle, as exemplified

³⁴See below, on II,32,62.

in Rome, Jupiter, and also Propertius. This principle Propertius sees as weak, and in danger of submission to the more dominant feminine principle, represented by Cleopatra, the women presented in the exempla, and his own mistress, Cynthia.

At the moment, Rome and the masculine principle are safe, for Cleopatra is defeated--her hands "accepere Romula vincla" and the verb "trahere" is now applied to her. But the "colubri" of l. 53 link her with the formidable magic of Medea, and the adjective "sepulta" recalls Penthesilea, who conquered Achilles after her own death. The phrase, "toto praesidet orbe," used of Rome, recalls Hercules and his enslavement to a woman, while the mention of "femineus Mars" suggests Penthesilea. The treatment of the list of Roman heroes that follows (l. 67 [transposed]-64) becomes gradually more and more grotesque, taking on an air of triviality and unreality as it ends:

Coclitis abscissos testatur semita pontis;
est cui cognomen corvus habere dedit.
(63-64)

The gods have preserved Rome's "moenia" this time; but we are reminded of the great "moenia" that Semiramis built (l. 23). In l. 66, juxtaposition links Rome with Caesar and Jupiter. Jupiter has already been shown to be weak (l. 28). The next line, 69, links Propertius himself to these representations of the masculine principle; for Apollo is both Augustus' patron and the leader of the Muses, the god of poetry.

The last couplet returns, less openly, to the dominance of women. The sailor may be identified with the sailor of l. 5, who knows what his fate will be, just as Propertius knows his own fate. With the Ionian Sea, the couplet returns to the motif of the poem's beginning;

for it was in the Ionian Sea that Propertius lost Cynthia in the poem that describes a "wish-fulfillment dream," II,26.

In III,11, then, Propertius identifies himself with Rome, represented by Augustus and Jupiter, in an exemplification of things masculine. The male world, he feels, is in danger of being dominated by women of strong personality--women like Cleopatra and Cynthia.

The adjective "Herculeum" in II,32,5, then, has far-reaching associations. In the context of the Propertian corpus, it recalls the luxurious living and casual love affairs of Baiae, and it suggests the dominance that Propertius feels Cynthia exercises over him. Both these ideas--casual infidelity and inversion of sex roles--are going to be important as II,32 develops; in l. 5, they are suggested for the first time.

Appia cur totiens te via ducit anus?
1. 6

Of the manuscript readings, only "ducit anum" (F, L, P, D, V₁) and "ducit anus" (V₂, Vo) can stand in the context of the line. To read "ducit anum" would be to mean that Propertius taunts Cynthia with her age; but he does not do this until the end of Book III, when he is (apparently) ready to make a final break.

The reading "ducit anus" has also met with objections, which have lead to the conjecture "Lanuvium" by Jortin.³⁵ Enk³⁶ feels that

³⁵"Critical Remarks on Propertius," Tracts phil. crit. and miscell. II (London, 1790), p. 298-314; complete reference in Sex. Propertii Elegiarum: Liber I (Monobiblos), ed. P. J. Enk (Leyden, 1946), 110.

³⁶Ad Propertii Carmina Commentarius Criticus (Leipzig, 1911), 183.

"Appia via anus" is not Latin, and rejects such parallels as "charta anus" (Catullus #68, 46) and "fama anus" (Catullus #78, 10), which are cited by Rothstein.³⁷ We may follow Shackleton Bailey,³⁸ however, in taking "anus" with "via," in apposition to "Appia," giving the sense, "Appia, that ancient road." It is also objected that "ducit" requires the expression of a "place to which" the road leads. Shackleton Bailey (ad loc.) replies that "Appia indicates direction as well as Tibur," that the direction indicated is south. I believe, however, that Propertius suggests a more definite destination than this. The effect of combining the mention by name of the Via Appia--made prominent by the emphatic position of Appia and its separation from its appositive--and the epithet "anus," which emphasizes its great age, with the suggestion of Baiae in the line preceding is to turn the reader's thoughts to the road's builder, Appius Claudius Caecus; and this association, taken in the general context of Cynthia's infidelity, suggests that passage of Cicero's Pro Caelio in which, employing the figure of prosopopoeia, he makes Claudius Caecus ask Clodia, "ideo viam munivi ut eam tu alienis viris comitata celebrares?" (c.34) It appears, then, that "anus" is necessary support for an allusion that Propertius could not have expected his reader to understand at first glance. The uncommonness of the expression leads the reader to re-read the line and to consider it carefully. "Ducit" also is highly desirable; for I doubt whether the "via" can be said to "deportare" her in the same way that her "esseda" does.

³⁷op. cit. (n.1, above), ad loc.

³⁸Propertiana (Cambridge, 1956), 126.

hoc utinam spatiere loco quodcumque vacabis,
 Cynthia, sed tibi me credere turba vetat
 cum videt accensis devotam currere taedis
 in nemus et Triviae lumina ferre deae.
 1. 7 - 10

This passage begins with a brief contrast between Cynthia as he would like to see her and Cynthia as she, in fact, is. In contrast to the places described in l. 2-6, he wants her to stay "hoc loco"--that is, in Rome. He wants her, moreover, to "spatiari" rather than to "currere in nemus." The contrast, however, soon breaks down, as he turns again to her infidelity.

She is called by name here for the second time in six lines (cf. l. 2). As we have seen, "Cynthia" has unpleasant associations; and repetition of this kind is not common except in lampoons or magical incantations. Examples may be found in Catullus:

Multus homo es, Naso, neque tecum multus homo est, quin
 te scindat: Naso, multus es et pathicus.
 (#112)

Gallus habet fratres, quorum est lepidissima coniunx
 alterius, lepidus filius alterius.
 Gallus homo est bellus: nam dulces iungit amores,
 cum puero ut bello bella puella cubet.
 Gallus homo est stultus nec se videt esse maritum,
 qui patruus patruī monstret adulterium.
 (#78)

Catullus has poems of this kind even about Lesbia:

Caeli, Lesbia nostra, Lesbia illa,
 illa Lesbia, quam Catullus unam
 plus quam se atque suos amavit omnes:
 nunc in quadriviis et angiportis
 glubit magnanimos Remi nepotes.
 (#58)

Similarly, Propertius frequently repeats Cynthia's name in unpleasant poems. In II,5, for example, her name appears five times.

This is an angry poem; he threatens to leave her:

Hoc verum est, tota te ferri, Cynthia, Roma,
 et non ignota vivere nequitia?
 haec merui sperare? dabis mihi, perfida, poenas;
 et nobis aliquo, Cynthia, ventus erit.
 (1-4)

nunc est ira recens, nunc est discedere tempus:
 si dolor afuerit, crede, redibit amor.
 (9-10)

He cannot actually leave her, however, even though he may want to:

quam facile irati verbo mutantur amantes:
 dum licet, iniusto subtrahe colla iugo.
 (13-14)

and so he takes his revenge in verse:

scribam igitur, quod non umquam tua deleat aetas,
 "Cynthia, forma potens; Cynthia, verba levis."
 crede mihi, quamvis contemnas murmura famae,
 hic tibi pallori, Cynthia, versus erit.
 (27-30)

Another example is I,11, where Cynthia's name occurs four times. This is a poem about her infidelity, with much similarity to II,32, although not so bitter. It begins:

Ecquid te mediis cessantem, Cynthia, Baïs,
 qua iacet Herculeis semita litoribus,
 et modo Thesproti mirantem subdita regno
 proxima Misenis aequora nobilibus,
 nostri cura subit memores a! ducere noctes?
 ecquis in extremo restat amore locus?
 an te nescioquis simulatis ignibus hostis
 sustulit e nostris, Cynthia, carminibus?
 (1-8)

The effect of repeating her name, then, is to raise unpleasant associations.

The motif of witchcraft recurs in these lines. The adjective "devotam" that is applied to Cynthia means not only "bound by a votum," the obvious meaning here, but also "bewitched;" this second sense must

underlie the apparent meaning, and thus recall Cynthia's connection with magic.

This allusion is strengthened by the mention of Trivia; for she is the triple goddess Diana/Hekate/Luna--and in particular, Hekate.³⁹

The idea of fire is prominent in this passage; Cynthia runs with "accensis taedis" (l. 9) and carries "lumina." Torches, moreover, are an attribute of both Hekate and Diana; and the moon, as a source of light, may be considered fire. In the context of the passage, the fire inevitably becomes associated with Cynthia's infidelity, an association which continues throughout the poem. The use of "lumina" serves to connect the fire motif with the eyes of l. 1-2, and thus with the idea of infidelity expressed there.

scilicet umbrosis sordet Pompeia columnis
 porticus, aulaeis nobilis Attalicis,
 et platanis creber pariter surgentibus ordo,
 flumina sopito quaeque Marone cadunt,
 et leviter nymphis tota crepitantibus urbe
 cum subito Triton ore recondit aquam.

l. 11 - 16

This passage presents Rome, as a contrast to the places Cyn-

³⁹This Trivia may be the Diana Nemorensis of Aricia, as the editors state (see, for example, Camps, *op. cit.*, n.3, above, *ad loc.*), but this is unproven; it is no more than a possibility. The only evidence which connects the name "Trivia" with Arician Diana is Statius' reference to the "Aricinum Triviae nemus" (*Silv.* III,1,55-58) and Vergil's use of the name (*Aen.* VII,774-780) in connection with Virbius, the associate of Diana Nemorensis; but "Trivia" was a common by-name for Diana (e.g. Catullus #34,15 and #66,5) and may well have been so used in these passages. References which connect Trivia with nemora fall into the same category. The only reference to a torch ceremony at Aricia is a passage in Ovid (*Fasti* III,267ff.) which may well be an imitation of Propertius.

thia visits to carry on her affairs. The symbolism centres around the trees (l. 11-13) and the water (l. 14-16) of the city.

The columns of l. 11-12 and the trees of l. 13 are symbolically equivalent. The columns are civilization's replacement for trees--a shady place to walk, instead of the trees which the city has destroyed. This emphasizes the urban aspect of the symbol. The orderly row of plane trees, so like the portico's row of columns, serves to identify the symbol as a whole. In default of a single symbol with all the implications he wants to make, Propertius must use two symbols--each with some of these implications--and identify them to the greatest extent possible. Thus, trees serve to reinforce the water-symbolism, as often in Propertius' poetry; they are also phallic, to a degree. But they are rustic, and so the urban aspect of the symbol must be emphasized by the complement, columns, which also have a much stronger phallic resemblance.

Both the column-trees and the water are phallic symbols. The suggestion lies in the implications of the visual images presented and the diction used. In l. 11-13, objects resembling phalli are pictured as rising ("surgentibus"); the phallic resemblance is emphasized by the juxtaposition of "porticus"--in which, by definition,⁴⁰ columns are prominent--and "columnis," the specific object in question. In l. 14-16, correspondingly, we find liquid falling ("cadiť"); the suggestion is of erection and ejaculation. The diction supports this idea: "pariter" suggests a pair, a couple; "sopito" (sleepy) places them in bed; "nymphis" suggests a nubile woman; and "ore recondit" then suggests copulation.

⁴⁰"A walk covered by a roof supported by columns," Lewis & Short.

In his poems about death, Propertius often mentions the water of Lethe or Styx where the reference is not strictly necessary. An example is IV,7, where Cynthia's ghost mentions the waters of death twice, at l. 10 and l. 56. His two consolationes, III,7 and III,18, are both concerned with death by drowning. In a very large number of poems water is associated with danger and with the possibility of death. In I,17, this theme is combined with that of desertion, as Propertius represents himself as being shipwrecked in punishment for having left Cynthia.

An interesting example of Propertius' use of water as a symbol is provided by III,21. In this poem he has (he says) decided on a final break with Cynthia and a trip to the Greek East. Generally in the corpus water is looked on unfavourably as a symbol of separation from Cynthia. In III,21, it still symbolizes separation, but in the light of Propertius' determination, this seems to be a good thing. He says, for example:

nunc agite, o socii, propellite in aequora navem,
 remorumque pares ducite sorte vices,
 iungiteque extremo felicia lintea malo:
 iam liquidum nautis aura secundat iter.
 (11-14)

The favourable aspect given the sea-water is in direct and deliberate contradiction to the aura of fear and misery which surrounds it elsewhere; thus it emphasizes Propertius' determination to make a final break.

In the area of poetry, sea-water represents the epic genre that Propertius finds so unsuited to his talents. In III,9, he contrasts the sea of epic with the stream of elegy, asserting the impropriety of his attempting epic:

non ego velifera tumidum mare findo carina:
 tota sub exiguo flumine nostra mora est.
 (35-36)

In III,3, similarly, Apollo commands him to avoid the "turba" in the middle of the sea of poetry but to keep to the shallow water at the edge--to his own slighter genre:

alter remus aquas, alter tibi radat harenas,
tutus eris: medio maxima turba mari est.
(23-24)

Fountain-water, on the other hand, symbolizes his own poetic inspiration. This idea is prominent in III,1 and III,3. His inspiration comes "puro de fonte" (III,1,3), and he appeals to Callimachus and Philitas, as his masters in elegy, with the words, "quamve bibistis aquam?" (III,1,6). Similarly he refers to the Muses' spring "Bellero-phontei qua fluit umor equi" (III,3,2). He considers, he says, turning "parvaque tam magnis . . . fontibus ora/unde pater sitiens Ennius ante bibit" (III,3,5-6); but Apollo turns him back to elegy (l. 23-24, above) and he concludes:

taliam Calliope, lymphisque a fonte petitis,
ora Philitea nostra rigavit aqua.
(51-52)

The water of II,32,14-16 is fountain water and as such has this same idea of inspiration behind it. The trees support the meaning of the water, as is often the case. In III,1, for example, the fountain of poetic inspiration is to be found in the "nemus" of Propertius' poetic models:

Callimachi Manes et Coi sacra Philitae,
in vestrum, quaeso, me sinite ire nemus.
primus ego ingredior puro de fonte sacerdos
Italia per Graios orgia ferre choros.
(III,1,1-4)

Trees and water together make up the scene of Tarpeia's love for Tatius, in IV,4:

lucus erat felix hederoso conditus antro,
 multaue nativis obstrepit arbor aquis.
 Silvani ramosa domus, quo dulcis ab aestu
 fistula poturas ire iubebat ovis.
 (IV,4,3-6)

The idea of inspiration, then, is added to the phallic symbolism of the whole passage, and inspiration and sex are seen as part of a whole. In other poems, Propertius refers to Cynthia or to his love for her as his inspiration; for example,

non haec Calliope, non haec mihi cantat Apollo;
 ingenium nobis ipsa puella facit.
 (II,1,3-4)

The totality made up of sex and inspiration, then, is qualified by equation with Cynthia; to Propertius, sex and poetic inspiration and Cynthia are all the same. In such poems as III,1 and III,3 he affirms his fidelity to elegiac poetry; similarly, he frequently claims fidelity to Cynthia. This concept of unfailing fidelity to an ideal implies an obligation to be faithful in return. His inspiration shows itself faithful, so to speak, when Apollo and the Muses command him to continue writing elegy. Cynthia should show a similar fidelity; but apparently she does not.

This idea of obligation is reinforced by the negative cast of the sentence; Propertius' fidelity to her "sordet," even though she should return that fidelity.

The trees and water of Rome, then, are connected with the fidelity that Cynthia owes Propertius, and are therefore established as symbols of faithful love, in opposition to the infidelity of the preceding lines. In l. 7, "hoc loco"--i.e. Rome--was opposed, as a symbol of fidelity, to the places in Latium where Cynthia went for illicit affairs.

This reference is now picked up in the trees and water of the city; Rome is, then, by inference, also a symbol of fidelity.

falleris; ista tui furtum via monstrat amoris.
 non urbem, demens, lumina nostra fugis!
 1. 17 - 18

The couplet begins as if it might be put into the mouth of another speaker--probably Cynthia, defending herself. The awkwardness of "falleris," standing alone as it does, is indicated by the longer clause that the editors feel bound to supply in order to complete the sense. Camps, op. cit. (n.3, above), ad loc., for example, comments on this line, "'you are mistaken,' with which we must supply 'if you suppose that I am deceived'."

There are not enough lines, however, that might be assigned to another speaker for us to assume definite conversation. At the most, only "falleris" (1. 17), lines 25-26, and possibly lines 19-20 can be attributed to another speaker; but it is not made clear that these must be spoken by a second person, and there are too few lines to assume a second speaker without such clarity.

Propertius cannot have been unaware of this, however. His intention must have been to suggest conversation without making it explicit. This suggestion would then support the rhetorical and slightly prosy tone that appears above (1. 1-2, for example) and recurs later in the poem.

"Non urbem . . . lumina fugis" sums up the symbolism of the poem to this point. Although here the "lumina" are Propertius', the feeling of infidelity is retained from lines 2 and 10, and this is the

over-all impression conveyed by the symbol. "Lumina," representing the infidelity of l. 1-10, is set in opposition to "urbem"--that is, to Rome, representing the fidelity of l. 11-16, for which Propertius hopes.

nil agis; insidias in me componis inanis;
 tendis iners docto retia nota mihi!
 1. 19 - 20

The metaphor, drawn from hunting, recalls Diana, the huntress. We are reminded of the "Trivia dea" of l. 10, and of the infidelity that was connected with the goddess there. Cynthia, a huntress like her patron goddess, is laying traps for Propertius; he, then, is the hunted and she the hunter--a clear inversion in the roles of the sexes. We are reminded again of Pro Caelio and of the picture Cicero presents, in chapter 36, of Clodia--a wilful and domineering woman--making advances to Caelius; similarly, she is called "imperiatrix" in c.67. Here, however, the inversion is twisted, for in actuality, Cynthia is trying to escape, and the nets she lays for him are nets of deceit, intended to prevent him from learning the truth. This, he implies, she has done before, so that the nets are "nota" and he is "doctus."

sed de me minus est famae iactura pudicae;
 tanta tibi miserae quanta meretur erit.
 1. 21 - 22

This is a rather ambiguous statement, with very cynical undertones. Enk⁴¹ recognizes this, adding that "miserae" is inserted, "ne

⁴¹Liber Secundus, ad loc.

nimis acerbe loqui videretur neve eam laederet." Her reputation and its loss, he implies, are not very important at all ("quanta meretur").

The phrase "famae iactura pudicae" is legalistic, and suggests the possible legal penalties for her infidelity. If, as E. H. Goddard⁴² suggests, Cynthia was not a meretrix, but rather Propertius' concubina, she was liable to legal penalties if she were proven to be incesta. She could be sued for adultery and lose considerable property in damages. She could, moreover, be denounced as a meretrix, legally defined as "quae palam quaestum corpore fecit"--a definition explained by Ulpian thus: "A woman may give herself to one man or to more and may receive money, but she does not therefore come under the category: she must 'vicem prostitutae sustinere,' and if she does that, then she comes under the category even if she receives no money."⁴³

The "loss of her good name," then, is a very real and threatening possibility, in a legal as well as a social sense.

nuper enim de te nostras me laedit ad auris
 rumor et in tota non bonus urbe fuit.
 1. 23 - 24

The opening words of the couplet, "nuper enim," are slightly prosy, and maintain the unpoetic tone which has occurred at several points in the poem.

The "rumor . . . in tota . . . urbe" reminds the reader of the opening line of II,5:

⁴²"Propertius, Cynthia, and Augustus," CR, XXXVII (1923), 153-6.

⁴³Quoted in Goddard, op. cit. (n.42, above), 154.

Hoc verum est, tota te ferri, Cynthia, Roma?
(II,5,1)

and of "nequitia," the word Propertius applies to Cynthia there. Nequitia is the quality of being bad "in all degrees" (Lewis & Short) and of being worthless--a terrible word to apply to her.⁴⁴

"Tota . . . urbe" refers to Rome, and brings about a modification in the significance of the symbol. Rome is still sympathetic to Propertius, but it is no longer free of the influence of Cynthia's affairs.

sed tu non debes inimicae credere linguae;
semper formosis fabula poena fuit.
non tua deprenso damnata est fama veneno;
testis eris puras, Phoebe, videre manus.
1. 25 - 28

In this passage, the legalistic tone of the language becomes prominent. Many of the words and phrases are those of the courtroom: "inimicae linguae," "credere," "poena," "damnata," "testis," "puras manus manus." This legalistic usage, in fact, could account for the strained use of "credere" that has so worried the editors.⁴⁵ Something of the prosecutor's speech may be found in the "inimica lingua," and in the "fabula" that is "poena." The legalism and formality of the language suggests a certain impersonality, which goes with Propertius' new cynicism. It serves to establish a little distance between himself and Cyn-

⁴⁴For "nequitia" in II,5, see Braun, op. cit. (n.15, above), 57-58.

⁴⁵e.g. Camps, op. cit. (n.3, above) who accepts the emendation "cedere." Compare Shackleton Bailey, op. cit. (n.38, above), ad loc.: "It seems best to acquiesce in a logical anomaly . . ."

thia with her infidelity.

The argument of l. 26, though quite commonplace, reminds us of chapters 6 and 38 of Pro Caelio, where Cicero uses the same argument:

Sunt enim ista maledicta pervolgata in omnis quorum in adulescentia forma et species erat liberalis. Sed alius est male dicere, aliud accusare.

(c.6)

Thus Cicero also joins the idea that gossip always pursues beauty with advice to disregard all but clear accusation.

The "venenum" of l. 27, which is connected with Cynthia by means of the device known as praeteritio, is both poison and magical potion. Legitimate medicine, in contrast, is medicina. In Propertius, venenum is frequently love's pain or its destructive power, while a cure for love and its pain is medicina. Venenum on Cupid's arrows brings love's pain (II,12,19); one might die by venenum for love (II,24,27) cf. II,17,14); venenum destroys just as a sword does (II,34,14). Medicina, on the other hand, is a cure. Speaking of it literally he says:

omnis humanos sanat medicina dolores:
solus amor morbi non amat artificem.
(II,1,57-58)

He speaks of medicina more metaphorically as a cure for love (I,5,28), one which may be found in pride (II,14,16) or in wine (III,17,4).

Venenum, then, generally represents love's bitter aspect; but in II,32,27, both of its primary connotations have significance beyond the general feeling of pain that surrounds the word. As potion, it recalls the magic that occurs in the context of infidelity in l. 2-10, and so brings to this passage a sense of Cynthia's wrongdoing. As poison, it recalls not only the charge against Caelius of trying to poison Clodia, but more particularly the death of Metellus Celer and the rumours that

Clodia had poisoned him--a death which Cicero dwells on in c. 59-60 of Pro Caelio.

The "venenum" and its implications are made the more striking in this passage by the lack of introduction. "Venenum" simply appears--quite suddenly--forcing the reader to pause and look for the meaning of the motif.

In l. 28, Phoebus is called upon to attest to Cynthia's "puras manus." Phoebus Apollo is a biased witness, however, since he is the brother of Diana who is to be identified with Cynthia. He is to "see" these pure hands, moreover, although no verb is necessary to complete the sense; this connects him with the eyes-symbolism that represents Cynthia's infidelity. In addition, he is the sun-god, as is emphasized by the choice of the name "Phoebus," and is thus connected with the fire that symbolizes infidelity in l. 11-12. All of these associations with infidelity, then, serve to negate the value of this statement of Cynthia's "puras manus."

sin autem longo nox una aut altera lusu
consumpta est, non me crimina parva movent.
l. 29 - 30

This couplet, also is a sarcastic cut at Cynthia.

The mention of "crimina" reminds us of the "crimen" of l. 2, forming a link between the eyes that symbolize infidelity there and the exempla that are to follow.

Tyndaris externo patriam mutavit amore
 et sine decreto viva reducta domum est.
 1. 31 - 32

The exemplum of this couplet is, of course, Helen of Troy. Helen also is closely associated with Cynthia;⁴⁶ in III,3, for example, Cynthia is identified with her as a pawn of the gods and a personification of love:

gloria Romanis una es tu nata puellis:
 Romana accumbes prima puella Iovi,
 nec semper nobiscum humana cubilia vises;
 post Helenam haec terris forma secunda redit.
 hac ego nunc mirer si flagret nostra iuventus?
 pulchrius hac fuerat, Troia, perire tibi.
 (29-34)

Similarly, in III,8, he directly compares Cynthia and himself to Paris and Helen:

odi ego quae numquam pungunt suspiria somnos:
 semper in irata pallidus esse velim.
 dulcior ignis erat Paridi, cum Graia per arma
 Tyndaridi poterat gaudia ferre suae:
 dum vincunt Danaï, dum restat barbarus Hector,
 ille Helenae in gremio maxima bella gerit.
 aut tecum aut pro te mihi cum rivalibus arma
 semper erunt: in te pax mihi nulla placet.
 (27-34)

In the present context, Helen is to serve as a precedent, and thus as an excuse, for Cynthia's behaviour. But the exemplum must be examined carefully, for once again Propertius suggests more than he says.

Helen is called "Tyndaris" in order that the reader, in choosing between Tyndareus' two famous daughters, should recall the other-- i.e. Clytaemnestra, the murderer of her husband. We are now reminded of Clodia and of the implications that underlie II,32,27.

⁴⁶See Braun, op. cit. (n.15, above), 28-38.

The emphasis in the exemplum is on Helen's return home. We see a humiliated and slightly comic figure. Moreover, she is brought home "viva." This legalism recalls the strictness of Roman probity laws; Helen's husband could have killed her for her adultery. Cynthia, then, is warned against the consequences of being unfaithful.

The use of the patronymic and the collocation of "externo patriam" gives to l. 31 a rather serious and somewhat elevated tone; in fact, the line reaches the last word before it becomes definitely erotic. By emphasizing the foreignness and the abandonment of native ways, it implies that Helen's adultery--and so Cynthia's infidelity--was an un-Roman action; Rome still stands as a symbol of fidelity. In point of fact, Propertius intends to show that Helen's, and therefore Cynthia's action was very Roman--Rome will become a symbol of infidelity.

ipsa Venus fertur corrupta libidine Martis
nec minus in caelo semper honesta fuit.
l. 33 - 34

This exemplum is the story of Venus and Mars, and of their being caught together in a net laid by Vulcan. This is a comic story from the time of its first appearance in Homer,⁴⁷ and the comic overtones decrease any value it may have as a serious exemplum.

Vulcan, as the god of fire, connects this allusion with the fire-symbolism of l. 9-10; fire, then, returns, still a symbol of infidelity. Vulcan's net provides a connection with the net of the hunting metaphor in l. 19-20, and so gives a tinge of infidelity to that

⁴⁷Odyssey VIII, 276ff.

figure too.

The main point of the couplet is contained in the second line; although Venus was clearly an adulteress, she was "nec minus honesta." A woman's behaviour, it seems, has no effect in actual fact upon her honor--her position and reputation. Honestas, then, is seen in a very dubious light.

quamvis Ida †Parim† pastorem dicat amasse
 atque inter pecudes accubuisse deam.
 1. 35 - 36

The textual problem in 1. 35 makes this passage very difficult to interpret. Most editors feel that the allusion is to the affair of Venus and Anchises, and that "Parim" is corrupt; there are some, however, who feel that "Parim" is sound, and that the allusion is to Paris and Oenone.⁴⁸ Both allusions can function meaningfully within the poem.

The myth of Paris and Oenone suggests the betrayal and infidelity with which Propertius is concerned in this poem. As Cynthia abandons Propertius, so Paris abandoned Oenone. Implicit in the allusion is a warning to Cynthia--in abandoning Oenone for Helen, Paris brought disaster on his city and himself, and he ultimately died when Oenone bitterly refused to heal his wounds.

The myth of Venus and Anchises also implies a warning for Cynthia; for Anchises was struck and crippled by a thunderbolt in punishment for boasting of the affair. The heaviness of the strongly spondaic

⁴⁸For a discussion of the problem and of the emendations that have been suggested, see Enk, Commentarius Criticus (n.36, above), 186-188.

line underlines the warning of either allusion:

— — — — —
 quamvis Ida †Parim† pastorem dicat amasse

The story of Venus and Anchises is connected also with Rome, for their child was Aeneas, ancestor of Rome's founder and of the contemporary regime. Through this allusion, then, Rome would be associated with infidelity. Since in l. 11-16 Rome has been so strongly associated with the fidelity for which Propertius hopes, its symbolic value would now be undercut and reversed.

Certain observations about the passage apply equally well to either myth. The reference to the man as "pastorem" and the construction of the exemplum as a concessive clause suggest that the "deam" was not very careful in her choice of lovers. The mention of "pecudes" picks up the animal image implicit in the hunting metaphor of l. 19-20. The connection of Vulcan's net (l. 33-34) with the "retia" of l. 19-20 has already reflected a tinge of infidelity back on the hunting metaphor; now the animal imagery--found so closely connected with infidelity in l. 35-36--adds to this effect.

Both the possible allusions of l. 35-36, then, contribute to the meaning of the poem. I consider it quite possible that Propertius wrote some rather colourless word--like Enk's "etiam,"⁴⁹ for example--leaving the reader to consider the possibilities and accept either or both.

⁴⁹Commentarius Criticus (n.36, above), ad loc.

hoc et Hamadryadum spectavit turba sororum
 Silenique senes et pater ipse chori
 cum quibus Idaeo legisti poma sub antro
 supposita excipiens, Nai, caduca manu.
 1. 37 - 40

In these lines, Propertius goes on to consider the witnesses to Venus' love affair. Their very existence connects them with infidelity; for seeing ("spectavit," l. 37) and eyes have symbolized that from the beginning of the poem. The "turba" recalls that of l. 8-9--the throng that was witness to Cynthia's infidelity there; and by means of these turbae a link is established between Cynthia's infidelity at the rite of Diana and Venus' adultery.

Two of the symbols of fidelity that occurred earlier in the poem are now reversed. In l. 11-14, trees were connected with faithful love--an alternative to Cynthia's escapades in the cities of Latium. Now, however, they are found in a context of infidelity. The Hamadryads who witness Venus' affair are the nymphs of trees, and the Naiad of l. 40 is picking fruit from a tree. Trees, then, are implied twice in a passage whose context (Venus' illicit affair) and motifs (eyes, turba) are connected consistently with infidelity. A similar process occurs with the symbol of water; for the Naiad, a spirit of water, is also found in this context of infidelity--in contrast with the faithful love that water symbolized in l. 14-16.

In lines 37-40, Propertius moves gradually away from his subject into a pastoral reverie. In thus drawing his reader's attention away from the unpleasantness and emotional tension of adultery into the more pleasant and relaxed pastoral atmosphere, he lessens the lasting

effect of his exempla. This and the comic aspects of the first two exempla completely undercut their serious value in excusing Cynthia's actions.

an quisquam in tanto stuprorum examine quaerit
 cur haec tam dives? quis dedit? unde dedit?
 O nimium nostro felicem tempore Romam
 si contra mores una puella facit!
 haec eadem ante illam iam impune et Lesbia fecit;
 quae sequitur certe est invidiosa minus.
 qui quaerit Tatios veteres duosque Sabinos,
 hic posuit nostra nuper in urbe pedem.
 1. 41 - 48

In these lines the poem suddenly becomes very rhetorical in language and style. The abrupt series of questions in l. 42 suggests a prosecutor's speech or a courtroom cross-examination. For example, Camps, op. cit. (n.3, above), ad loc., cites the following parallels from Cicero:

doce quam pecuniam Cluentius dederit, unde dederit, quem-
 admodum dederit.

(Cluent. 124)

cui dedit? per quam dedit? unde aut quantum dedit?

(Rosc. Am. 74)

and from Quintilian:

quis numeravit? ubi? unde?

(I. O. V,vii,37)

This impression is underlined by the staccato sound effect of five d's and two t's in the second half of the line.

A legal undertone is added by the word "examen" in l. 41. The two words "examen," meaning "a multitude, swarm," and "examen," meaning "a balance; a weighing, consideration," are indistinguishable in form;

the reader must choose between them according to the sense of the context. Here the meaning is clearly "a multitude," but the meaning of the other word must also be felt as an undertone.

Line 43 is a line written to be declaimed. Its sound effects suit it to oratory--the sonorous consonants, n, m, and r, and the long vowels, the accusative of exclamation and the interjection, o!, the weighty resonant quality produced by the predominance of spondees in the line.

The "una puella" who acts "contra mores" of l. 45 and the mention of Lesbia in l. 46 combine to suggest yet another comparison for Cynthia. It is generally accepted that the Lesbia of Catullus' poetry was the infamous Clodia, one of the sisters of Clodius Pulcher and wife of Metellus Celer--the object of Cicero's attack in his speech *Pro Caelio*.⁵⁰ The rhetorical nature of the passage, moreover, suggests to the reader Cicero's picture of her in that speech. Various parallels to that speech have already been pointed out--the importance attached to Baiae (l. 5; cf. *Pro Caelio* c.35, 38, 47, 49) and to the via Appia (l. 6; cf. *Pro Caelio*

⁵⁰ See Mauriz Schuster, "Valerius (Catullus)" in *RE* vii a (1948), cols. 2358-2359. The evidence consists mainly in the correspondence between the characteristics of Lesbia, as found in Catullus' poetry, and those of Clodia, as found in the *Pro Caelio* and elsewhere. Both were married women, with large flashing eyes. The rumour that Clodia was guilty of incest with her brother, Clodius Pulcher, may be echoed in Catullus' lampoon, "Lesbius est pulcher: quid ni? quem Lesbia malit/quam te cum tota gente, Catulle, tua." (#79) Cicero's comment about Metellus (*ad Att.* I,8,1), "Metellus non homo, sed litus atque aer et solitudo mera," may be compared with Catullus' remarks about Lesbia's husband: "Lesbia mi praesente viro mala plurima dicit:/haec illi fatuo maxima laetitia est./ mule, nil sentis?" (#83, 1-3) The epithet "quadrantaria" (explained as referring to the cheapest kind of prostitute) that is applied to Clodia by Caelius (quoted in Quintilian VIII,6,53) is paralleled by Catullus #58. Although the evidence is circumstantial, then, there is enough to make it probable that Lesbia is Clodia Metelli.

c.34) as the scenes of both women's casual and illicit love affairs; Clodia's boldness and domineering nature (c.36, 67), parallel to Propertius' feeling of Cynthia's domination over him (l. 19-20); the gossip that always follows beauty (l. 26; cf. *Pro Caelio* c.6, 38) and the argument in defence of forma that "aliud male dicere, aliud accusare" (*Pro Caelio* c.6; cf. l. 25); the charge of poisoning, rejected in Cynthia's case (l. 27-28) and only implied in Clodia's (*Pro Caelio* c.59-60). Moreover, the passages of rhetoric and legalism take on a new significance. By their tone, reminiscent of the courtroom, they accustom the reader to the atmosphere of a trial and thus prepare him for the parallel between a forensic oration and one aspect of Propertius' poem.

The mention of money in l. 42 parallels c.52 of *Pro Caelio*, where Cicero deals with the money that Caelius was alleged to have borrowed from Clodia, and also in Clodia's statue of Venus, the "spoliatrix" of her lovers.

The heroic exempla of l. 47 find a parallel in *Pro Caelio* also. A similar contrast of heroic with actual is to be found in c.39-40, where Cicero says:

ex hoc genere [i.e. the strictly virtuous] illos fuisse
arbitror Camillos, Fabricios, Curios, omnisque eos qui
haec ex minimis tanta fecerunt. verum haec genera virtutum
non solum in moribus nostris sed vix iam in libris reperi-
untur.

The prosopopoeia of c.33-34 is similar in effect, although the scale here is too large for direct comparison with l. 47.

Cynthia, then, is said to be like Lesbia/Clodia--and in particular, like the picture of Clodia that is presented by Cicero. The comparison is not a compliment. The insult is underlined by the elisions

of l. 45, especially the harsh "iam impune," which produce a sound effect like a sneer. Moreover, Cynthia is "quae sequitur"--second best. We are reminded that Clodia did not, in fact, act "impune," for Cicero's speech apparently made her so notorious that she retired from Rome and is not again mentioned in the extant writings of the period. This, then, is another warning to Cynthia. The adjective "invidiosa" recalls the motif of magic, which was connected with infidelity in Cynthia's trips in Latium and in her connection with the triformis dea, especially in the aspect of Hekate; for "invidere" can mean "to cast the evil eye." It is used in this sense by Catullus in one of the best-known of his poems, #5--another connection between Cynthia and Lesbia/Clodia.

In l. 48, the naivete of the rusticus, by the sharp contrast, underlines Propertius' own bitterness and cynicism.

The "urbs" of l. 47 is Rome--now a symbol of infidelity. This is a complete reversal of its symbolic value, and thus an indication of Propertius' disillusionment.

tu prius et fluctus poteris siccare marinos
 altaque mortali deligere astra manu
 quam facere ut nostrae nolint peccare puellae.
 1. 49 - 51.

The symbols are now entirely concerned with infidelity. The water of l. 49 is sea-water and represents infidelity, in contrast to the fountain-water of l. 14-16. Fire recurs with the mention of "astra;" it has represented infidelity from the beginning (cf. l. 9-10, 28).

"Nostrae puellae" of l. 51 are Roman girls; thus Propertius emphasizes the reversal of the city's symbolic value.

hic mos Saturno regna tenente fuit;
 at cum Deucalionis aquae fluxere per orbem
 et post antiquas Deucalionis aquas,
 1. 52 - 54

These lines return to the mythico-religious motif that has been associated with infidelity throughout the poem. Beginning with the "dubias sortis" of Praeneste (l. 3) and the goddess Trivia, and continuing in the exempla of l. 31-40, the theme now returns with the reference to Saturn.

A suggestion of fidelity reappears, with the mention of Saturn's innocent age; but it is lost in the abundance of symbols for infidelity. The words representing fidelity, "hic mos," are deliberately ambiguous--they may refer to the girls who "nolint peccare," of the clause immediately preceding, or to the idea of the whole preceding sentence. The fact that the editors find it necessary to specify the former indicates the difficulty. The mythological allusions--Hercules, Telegonus, Helen, Venus--have been too closely connected with infidelity for the motif to be entirely free of that implication now.

Water recurs in the form of Deucalion's flood; this is seawater, and its connection with infidelity is even more explicit than earlier in the poem. Deucalion's flood was sent by Zeus in punishment for man's wrongdoing; and in Propertius' eyes, the worst kind of wrongdoing is betrayal of one's lover. Moreover, in the poem, the flood marks the turning-point between the innocence of the Golden Age and the faithlessness of Propertius' own time. The double reference to the flood implies a double significance: Deucalion's wife was named Pyrrha, which means "fire-coloured"--and fire has consistently been a symbol of

infidelity. Fire and water, then, are connected as symbols of infidelity; and the reversal of the water-symbolism's meaning is reiterated. The adjective "antiquas" recalls ironically the association between "old" and "pure" in l. 47: "veteres durosque."

dic mihi--quis potuit lectum servare pudicum,
 quae dea cum solo vivere sola deo.
 1. 55 - 56

Propertius' disillusionment is expressed in the sarcasm of this couplet, as the interlocking order and repeated words suggest a tangle of arms and legs. The reader is reminded, too, of Venus, a "dea" who could not live with one single god, but rather loved others, both gods and men.

uxorem quondam magni Minois, ut aiunt,
 corrupit torvi candida forma bovis;
 nec minus aerato Danae circumdata muro
 non potuit magno casta negare Iovi.
 1. 57 - 60

These exempla present Propertius' mixed attitude toward Cynthia. In l. 57-58, the periphrasis "uxorem magni Minois" emphasizes the crime of adultery by the careful definition of the woman's married status; it also forces the reader to recall consciously her name, Pasiphae. "Pasiphae" means "far-shining;" there are two possible references for this meaning within the poem. First, it suggests the sun; this, in turn, suggests fire, a symbol of infidelity. Second, the meaning may be referred to the moon; this, in turn, implies a connection with Diana and

the rite of Trivia (l. 9-10), with Hekate and magic, and thus with Cynthia, who may be identified with this triple goddess. It is probable that Propertius recognized and intended both of these allusions; and both symbolize the same idea, that of infidelity.

The motif of Pasiphae's bull also implies symbols of infidelity. He came from the sea, and thus implies water, now a symbol of infidelity. The animal imagery that first appeared in the hunting metaphor of l. 19-20 and was closely associated with infidelity in the form of the "pecudes" of l. 35-36 is also recalled--not only by the bull but also by the wooden cow in which Pasiphae approached him.

The motif of the cow has significance for Propertius' relationship with Cynthia. Cynthia is a devotee of Isis, the Egyptian goddess who was identified with Io; and Io had taken the form of a cow.⁵¹ In II,28, Cynthia is compared to Io/Isis:

sed tibi vexatae per multa pericula vitae
extremo veniet mollior hora die.
Io versa caput primos mugiverat annos:
nunc dea, quae Nili flumina vacca bibit.
(15-18)

In IV,5 we find Cynthia's lena, while giving advice on holding the attention of her lovers, saying:

denique ubi amplexu Venerem promiseris empto,
fac simules puros Isidis esse dies.
(33-34)

In II,33, Cynthia forsakes Propertius for this very reason:

Tristia iam redeunt iterum sollemnia nobis:
Cynthia iam noctes est operata decem.
atque utinam pereant, Nilo quae sacra tepente
misit matronis Inachis Ausoniis!

⁵¹Rose, op. cit. (n.8, above), 271-272.

quae dea tam cupidos totiens divisit amantis,
 quaecumque illa fuit, semper amara fuit.
 (1-6)

Io/Isis of the cow's shape, then, is a cause of Cynthia's separation from him; and Propertius has clearly learned to see every separation as a possible occasion for infidelity.

The cow and bull, then, are a specific expression of the infidelity that has already come to be suggested by the animal imagery. The exemplum is, moreover, a warning to Cynthia--the offspring of Pasiphae and her bull was a monster, the Minotaur.

Danae, on the other hand, is treated sympathetically. Despite her affair with Zeus, she is called "casta." The only other reference to her in the Propertian corpus is in II,20:

mi licet aeratis astringant bracchia nodis,
 sint tua vel Danaes condita membra domo,
 in te ego et aeratas rumpam, mea vita, catenas,
 ferratam Danaes transiliamque domum.
 (9-12)

This passage is clearly sympathetic--indeed, romantic.

Danae, then, represents Cynthia as Propertius would like to see her--a basically good girl who has made a mistake. Pasiphae, on the other hand, represents her as in fact he does see her--shamelessly and flagrantly unfaithful.

quod si tu Graias es tuque imitata Latinas
 semper vive meo libera iudicio.
 1. 61 - 62

The final couplet sums up the symbolism of the poem.

The Greek girls recall the Greek mythological apparatus, which

always represents Cynthia's infidelity. Moreover, the contrast they present with the Roman girls parallels the contrast, early in the poem, between Rome and the cities of Latium; thus, those cities and their associated idea of infidelity are recalled to the reader's mind. The Latin girls, by contrast, represent Rome and the symbols associated with it; these seemed to be an alternative, but were discovered to be no better.

The legalism of "meo iudicio" recalls Pro Caelio and the comparison of Cynthia with Clodia. The general sense of the line recalls "impune" of l. 45--a word whose meaning was contradicted by the implications of the very exemplum to which it was attached. The exemplum of Helen, and by association with this the other exempla of that passage, are suggested by "vive," which recalls "viva," and by the legalism, which recalls "sine decreto," of l. 32.

"Libera" is a word of many associations. It refers to Cynthia's legally free status, and may be in contrast to real freedom--that is, freedom from love:

libertas quoniam nulli iam restat amanti,
nullus liber erit, si quis amare volet.
(II,23,23-24)

It is in contrast also to Propertius' own servitium--his own faithful love; in this sense, then, "libera" means "unfaithful."

It can mean "acquitted," and thus presents a contrast with Clodia, who suffered for her association with the law, but a parallel with Helen and Venus.

Finally, it compares her with the other libera puella in Propertius' poetry--the prostitute of II,23,13ff.

CHAPTER III

EVALUATION AND CONCLUSION

It is clear that Propertius' mood in II,32 is very cynical. His attitude toward Cynthia is harsh--an attitude of disillusionment. Several features of the poem indicate this.

Throughout the poem there is a strain of argumentation and of prosiness. Some of the diction belongs to prose rather than poetry--for example, "ergo" (l. 1), and "scilicet" (l. 11). Propertius uses oratorical structures and turns of phrase often; examples are the syllogistic nature of l. 1-2, the rhetorical questions that follow and the forensic nature of l. 41-48. The suggestion of conversation maintains a tone suited to prose. The oratorical and argumentative passages support the allusion to Cicero's Pro Caelio; in addition, they serve to maintain a certain distance between Propertius and his subject. He maintains a slight impersonality, in order to keep the poem's subject in perspective.

Many touches in language and turns of phrase indicate a cynical attitude, as when Propertius speaks of the "tui furtum amoris" (l. 17), and in ambiguous lines, such as l. 22, "tanta tibi miserae quanta meretur erit." There are also sarcastic lines, such as l. 56, "quae dea cum solo vivere [potuit] sola deo?"

A major indication of Propertius' disillusionment, however, is his treatment of the symbolism. Many symbols--for example, the eyes and

fire--are associated with infidelity from their first appearance in the poem. In opposition to these, he establishes symbols for fidelity in l. 11-16; these are (fountain-)water, trees, and the city of Rome. These symbols, however, are gradually undercut and worked into the pattern of the symbols for infidelity. The trees become associated with the love affair of Venus and Anchises (l. 35-40). The water becomes sea-water and the water of Deucalion's flood in l. 49-54, and thus comes to symbolize infidelity. The symbol of Rome is undercut with particular vehemence. It is associated with the affair of Venus and Anchises through their son, Aeneas, and thus with the contemporary rulers of Rome. All its girls are unfaithful, moreover, and among them especially the mistress of his predecessor in Latin elegy, Catullus.

The inference that Cynthia is comparable to the notorious Lesbia/Clodia is the surest indication of Propertius' deep bitterness. That Lesbia/Clodia was a woman of notorious sexual promiscuity is clear from both Catullus' poetry and Cicero's speech Pro Caelio; and it is clear that, in this poem, Propertius means his reader to recall Clodia, the real woman, as well as Lesbia, the character of Catullus' poetry. The reminiscences of Pro Caelio and the parallels to it are too numerous to set aside. The mention of Baiae and of the Appian Way; the recurrent strain of argumentation and rhetoric; the inversion of sex roles that is first suggested in l. 19-20 and reappears as an undertone of l. 57-58; the legalistic and rhetorical language of l. 25-28 and l. 41-44; the allusions to poison and money--all these recall Pro Caelio and the picture of Clodia presented there. In naming Lesbia, then, Propertius means his reader to recall the real woman behind the poetic persona,

and implies that the woman behind the persona of "Cynthia" is like her.

He also means to recall the poets that have created those personae. The writing of love poetry, and (partly, at least) in the same metre, about the same kind of woman is a close connection between Propertius and Catullus. The use of "invidiosa" with an underlying sense of "having the evil eye" recalls Catullus #5, where the word is used in the same sense; Lesbia, he says, must give him so many kisses that they will be innumerable, "ne quis malus invidere possit." (1. 12)⁵² This reference to the happy period of Catullus' love for Lesbia must, in a poem about infidelity, bring to the reader's mind the affair's terrible end, and such unhappy poems as #85:

Odi et amo. quare id faciam, fortasse requiris.
nescio, sed fieri sentio et excrucior.

and #75:

Huc est mens deducta tuà, mea Lesbia, culpa
atque ita se officio perdidit ipsa suo,
ut iam nec bene velle queat tibi, si optuma fias,
nec desistere amare, omnia si facias.

Propertius, then, means to suggest that his own attitude toward Cynthia is one of mixed emotions, and can be better understood by comparison with Catullus' feeling of combined desire and revulsion for Lesbia/Clodia.

The tension between the surface meaning of the poem and the meaning to be found in the symbols and allusions expresses this ambivalent attitude. On the one hand, Propertius appears more hurt than angry--sufficiently hurt to protest, but willing to endure her escapades rather than break off his own affair with her. On the other hand, however, he

⁵²Compare #7, 11-12:
quae [basia] nec pernumerare curiosi
possint nec mala fascinare lingua.

shows himself very angry indeed. The treatment of symbols and the refutation--by their own implications--of exempla that seem to justify her actions betray a bitterness and cynicism toward Cynthia that seem to foreshadow the end to the affair that is portrayed late in Book III.

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